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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
20 October 1961

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Cuban Internal Situation

CUBA

INTERNAL

1. Domestic dissatisfaction with the Castro regime, springing from the economic and political facts of life in Cuba today, is increasing but has not reached a level seriously threatening the stability of Castro's government.

Castro's opponents now include more people from the lower classes--that part of society upon which the regime depends for its domestic support--than ever before. It is also clear, however, that the majority of people within this group still support Castro, either for having already given them more than they ever had previously, or because they still believe in the regime's promises of material improvements. The still growing numbers in the vast Cuban bureaucracy and the militia, dependent on the regime for their livelihood and social status, furnish another important source of support for the regime.

2. Active opposition to Castro has revived somewhat since its virtual cessation in the weeks after the mid-April landings and the regime's intense campaign of terror against all known or suspected dissidents. Several small guerrilla bands are known to be operating on the island

Active opposition forces, however, are operating with the same handicaps that have limited their effectiveness all along: a lack of organization, a shortage of supplies, the absence of a strong leader of Castro's public appeal, the lack of a well-defined substitute for the Castro program, and factionalism among themselves. Their chances of effective military action are constantly growing smaller and the number of well-equipped, well-trained military and other security forces available to Castro is becoming larger.

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3. We believe Castro's regime has sufficient strength in its repressive apparatus to be able to meet any internal threat in the foreseeable future, barring Castro's assassination. Nevertheless, there are numerous indications of increasing discontent and disillusionment among the general public.

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[redacted] complaints about shortages of food and other common staples are becoming louder, and unhappiness with the degree of regimentation imposed on the people is beginning to be expressed. Regime leaders are publicly decrying worker absenteeism.

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[redacted] Resentment against the regime flared up in open demonstrations in Havana and several other Cuban cities in September when the government banned a religious procession. The historically weak position of the Roman Catholic Church in Cuba and Castro's drastic reduction of the number of clergymen remaining on the island make it unlikely that further major religious demonstrations will occur. However, it was notable that the September riots faced the regime for the first time with a major hostile demonstration that required the use of firearms to disperse.

4. The flow of Cubans from the island continues. Some leave by legal means; a greater number extralegally. By August, some 700 Cubans had taken asylum in several Latin American embassies in Havana; only recently has the Castro regime begun to permit some of these persons to leave. More than 15,000 Cubans with travel arrangements completed were reported by the press to have been affected by the regime's mid-September measure requiring new travel documentation.

5. Castro and his top lieutenants are reacting strongly to the growing unrest. "Revolutionary tribunals" have intensified their activities, and Cuban firing squads are reported to have executed at least 26 people in September.

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[redacted] Cuban officials and propaganda media have intensified their violent anti-US campaign, charging that the United States is preparing "a new, larger invasion." This campaign may be based on a genuine fear of an invasion or might be in part designed to divert public attention from local economic and political problems--a tactic which Castro has used in the past. It may also presage a Castro effort to discredit the United States by staging a faked invasion in advance of OAS consideration of the Cuban problem.

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6. The various measures of tightened internal security taken by the regime up to last April under the guise of temporary expedients have since that time become increasingly institutionalized and by now have assumed the character of permanent instruments of internal control. The most pervasive of these, the Revolutionary Defense Committees, comprise a nationwide informant network controlled by the Ministry of Interior. The goal, announced on 30 April, of 100,000 committees throughout the country composed of 500,000 "revolutionary vigilantes" has, according to government announcements in early autumn, been substantially accomplished. 25X6

7. Simultaneous with the increasing pervasiveness of the internal security apparatus has been the development of a concerted indoctrination campaign now frankly described as based on "Marxist-Leninist principles", much of it carried out under the guise of a campaign to eradicate illiteracy from the nation before the end of this year.

8. The political and organizational structure of the state is also undergoing a rapid evolution toward a system similar to the party and governmental structure found in the Soviet bloc. The old provincial and municipal governments are being replaced by Boards for Coordination, Execution, and Inspection (JUCEI). JUCEI have been formed since last June in all six provinces and subordinate ones have been set up or are in the process of formation in the municipalities. Local and provincial JUCEI are subordinate to a national group headed by Fidel Castro called the JUCEPLAN.

9. The prototype JUCEI was formed in Oriente province last spring under the direction of Raul Castro. According to a 4 June speech by Raul Castro, it consists of a "provincial congress," a 1,200-member body which is to convene "two or three times a year"; a plenum, which meets every few months; and other units which meet very frequently. Membership is theoretically representative of all major economic entities in the territory of responsibility. Frequent references to membership in JUCEI units appearing in the Cuban press, however, indicate that JUCEI members are drawn exclusively or almost exclusively from the ranks of the regime's political machine now being organized.

10. In his 4 June speech, Raul Castro described the JUCEI as "instruments for applying plans" at the local level which had been decided upon by higher authority. "Building socialism without

planning is impossible," he said, "and contrasts with the anarchy of the capitalist economy." Cuban Communist leader Blas Roca described the JUCEI on 14 August as "a new form of state power, a step forward in the procedure we are following for the direct establishment of the power of the people over all the country."

11. A parallel political machine is also emerging. The ORI (Integrated Revolutionary Organizations) is being established throughout the country as the first phase in creating an eventual United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution. Communist Secretary General Blas Roca has been the leading spokesman for and advocate of the new political organization. His public statements foreshadow a party system in which membership will be limited to the elite of the revolutionary struggle and will be a requisite to holding any positions of economic or political importance in the country. It is clear from the statements of ORI leaders that the new party is to be controlled by the Communists and based on "Marxist-Leninist principles."

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